



ARENA REPORT



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Last Issue

January 18, 1992

ARENA REPORT: THE FAMOUS FINAL SCENE

Regrets, I've had a few.....Thank you Frankie baby. Or was it Mike Ditka? I'm sure this is coming as a shock to most of you. But this is the final issue of "AR". Funny, I look back at my recently completed yearbook and see some of my excerpts like: "...and if I didn't publish this newsletter, there would be a void that would be missed." Or on page 32 in my ring announcing article, "Oh well, I don't want to give up "AR" anyways." Just goes to show what a difference four weeks makes. I made my decision on January 7th while on a five mile bike ride. A lot of thinking went on during those five miles. When I got home, I realized I had to start the wheels in motion so I made the first call to staffer Mike Terry. I realized that once I started talking there was no turning back. I was pretty upset after hanging up with Mike. When my wife got home twenty minutes later I told her. She was just as shocked as you are as I hadn't discussed what I was going to do. I felt better as the night went on and I can now say that I am very comfortable with my decision.

The reasons are many but the main two are the most important. (Makes sense right.) My family and my career. With an impending promotion at work, my hours would change drastically. I use to get home around 3:00 and work on the sheet for a couple of hours before Cheryl and Chris came home. That will no longer be possible. I use to pride myself on never missing my Monday afternoon mail date to all of you. I would no longer be able to get that done. And as most of you know, Cheryl, Chris, and I are expecting our second child in June. Believe me, I know what it's been like putting this thing out with one kid never mind two!

Will I miss it? Of course I will. After doing "AR" for four plus years, it's going to feel strange not sitting down at the desk to put it all together. But I'm looking forward to going back and just being a fan again. My interest in wrestling hasn't waned a bit. My desire to do a full fledged newsletter has.. As Mike Terry told me though, never say never. Who knows. I could come back next year or the year after. I won't say I'll never be back.

REFUNDS

I will start mailing out refund checks on February 8th. If you haven't ordered a yearbook and have 9 or more issues left on your subscription, I will send the yearbook and the difference unless you notify me before 2/8 that you want the total refund. For example: If you have 16 issues left on your mailing label, I will send the yearbook and a check for \$7.00. But if you don't want the yearbook I would send a check for the entire \$16.00. If you have below a 9 just send the difference and I'll send you out a yearbook and we'll be square. I have a limitless amount of yearbooks so I can accomodate everybody. The yearbook is 68 pages long and I feel helps me go out with a bang. It contains literally the who's who of sheet writers.

I hope to have everyone paid off by the end of March but please remember that "AR" was no money making venture and we will have to dip a bit into our personal finances to refund everybody. So if I'm a little later than March 31st, please don't send the collection agency after me.

FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE

To satisfy my urge to write and continue to correspond with as many of you that wish to, I will be putting out a one page live report and "Ramblings" approximately twice per month. All that I ask from you is a self addressed stamped envelope. My P.O. Box will remain open until May at which time you may use my home address of 916 Sloewood Ct. Lake Mary, FL 32746. This one pager will make me come full circle as that is what I was doing back in the mid-eighties before starting "AR". I would send them to the top three sheets back then, The Observer, Wrestling Forum, and Mat Results. The first two reports will be dated 2/5 (WWF Tampa) and 2/19 (WCW Jacksonville). Whether I get 6 responses or 300, it doesn't matter, it will still fill the slight void that will be there.

This issue will be a little different as I invited all my columnists to do a farewell column. Jeff Mullins also sent in a special letter that I wanted to print. Thanks to you and your relatives. Thanks to all who sent in results and letters for this issue but I hope you understand why I will not be using them here.

Jeff Bowdren has talked to me about starting his own newsletter to fill the void in the sheet biz that "AR" is leaving. We are getting together tomorrow night (1/16) to go over his ideas. They sound good. I hope you would all give it a shot. He has a survey in this issue. Please fill it out and help support an "AR" alumni.

As you can tell, I'm trying not to get too sentimental about all of this. But it's damn hard. All of you have given me great memories including past and present columnists- Evan Ginzburg, Jeff Mullins, Rodney Leighton, Mike Lano, Scott Hudson, Marianne Ryan, Jeff Siegel, K.C. O' Connor, Mike Terry (the most underrated writer in the sheet world. Hope he decides to go with Bowdren.), speaking of Bowdren, the booker himself who is one of the most gifted, creative, and knowledgeable writers around. If you decide to go ahead with a newsletter, you have my full support. And last but not least, is my best budro Klon. My personal confidante. We've had some great times with many more to come.

Thanks to all the people who have sent in results and letters through the years. I would love to list names but would be afraid to offend anyone I'd leave out so just know that I appreciated everyone one of them. And of course, thanks to you the readers for supporting "AR" the past 4½ years. It's been a great ride, but it's time to get off. There will be "Ramblings" scattered throughout this issue, mainly depending where I have room.

ARENA RAMBLINGS

Thanks to Jeff Mullins for the above title of what will be my one page report that will go out to those who send me a S.A.S.E.....I attended a WWF show in Orlando on 1/10. Here's what happened: 1) Skinner beat Micky Jay in 7:50 with a reverse DDT. Just comedy between two good friends. Jay reffed for Keirn & Mike Graham's PWF group. ½* 2) Shawn Michaels beat Marty Jannetty in a tremendous bout that went 12:50. Marty had two near falls that had the fans thinking the title would change. Real hot. Finish saw Marty miss a dive into the corner and Michales pinned him. **** 3) Typhoon big splashed Repo Man in 5:42. No redeemable value whatsoever. -** 4) Head Shrinkers over High Energy. Same match up as two months ago but wasn't billed as a return bout. Owen did a great outside dive onto Fatu. Thankfully Hart was in most of the way. Koko missed a corner charge and straddled himself on the buckles. Samu hit a side slam and pinned him at 8:03. 5) Randy Savage rolled up Papa Shango in 8:03. Savage subbed for Hacksaw Duggan who may be through in the ring with Titan. Bout stunk. ¼* 6) Tatanka samoan dropped Damien Demento in 13:18. Lots of Mondo chants as fans know Demento as Mondo Kleen who was the IWF champ. Hasn't improved much except for his bump taking. * 7) Virgil beat Frankie Lancaster in 6:19. Lancaster subbed for Rick Martel. These two missed more moves in the first 30 seconds than the rest of the card. Virgil won with a crucifix. 8) Bret Hart pinned Ric Flair in 21:40. They paced this bout so well it was scary. During the dull moments, Flair was getting great heat with the crowd so it was great entertainment. Ric acknowledged Chris Qualmann, Tony Aragona, and myself's chant of, "Bill Watts sucks". The Jerry Lawler influence in the WWF is apparent as when Bret makes his comeback, he pulls down his strap. Crowd responded well to it. Some fan in the front row was giving Flair all kinds of garbage. Flair opened the ropes and said, "Come on fatboy." He later pointed to the guy's wife and said, "I'll take your wife and make a woman out of her." The guy sat down pronto as we all laughed our butts off at him. Bret trapped Ric in a small package when Ric went for the figure four. Great action. ****They return to the area on 3/20 in Daytona Beach which is during spring break so I guess Vince thinks he can pop a good house. They are in Lakeland on 3/19 and Tampa 2/5 which will be my first "Arena" Rambling" report.....Undertaker missed a couple shots over the weekend due to his father suffering a stroke.....WWF lost TV in Nebraska and they did their last show in Lincoln on 1/16. No, Bruce Grummert was a good boy in the front row this time and didn't get thrown out.....ICW in Biddeford, ME drew 125 to see Nikolai Volkoff & Cousin Luke beat Johnny Wildside & Big City Mike. Tazmaniac beat Scott Taylor on that card as well.....Blackjack Mulligan started his new promotion here in Florida on 1/16. He's running the old Eddie Graham Sports Complex once a month. Results on the 16th saw Jim Neidhart go to a double count out with Cuban Assassin (David Sierra), Texas Long Riders went to a double DQ with the Bad Boys in a great brawl, Pat Tanaka & Molly McSahne beat Firecat (Brady Boone) & Allison Royal in a mixed match, Kendall Windham over Rick Diamond, Bongo the Cave Man (Tim Parker) beat The Assassin (Mike DeBacco), Mulligan beat the Mercenary, and Bongo won a battle royal. Attendance was said to be 200. They return on 2/13 with word that Kevin Sullivan will be on the card.....I wish Vince wishes he could sweeten up the noise on that "Monday Night Raw" show. The



SHOOTKICK

by Jeff Bowdren

Well, now that everyone is recovering from the holiday season, its time for your favorite writer to give someone a case of the post-holiday blues by giving them a stiff shot to the head.

This issue's Shootkick goes to Kevin Sullivan and Smokey Mountain Wrestling. The angle were Sullivan "stabbed" Brian Lee "47 times", just went too far. Jim Cornette has to understand that he has to keep a tight rein on Kevin with this feud. He risks losing everything he has spent the last year working for.

People generally either love or hate Kevin's devil gimmick. He has a tendency to be a little too hardcore sometimes, but his interviews have always been strong. I guess I have a unique view of this angle because I was a regular viewer of Florida wrestling from 1982 to '87, when Kevin first started the gimmick. The first few months it was tremendous. Kevin was still a babyface ("The Boston Battler") when a bounty was placed on Barry Windham (a younger and much thinner B.W.) The bounty, and lets remember that the nation's economy has certainly affected your basic wrestling bounty, was "\$1,100". Don't ask me how they arrived at this particular amount. Anyway, in comes Jake Roberts (a younger and much, much thinner Jake) to collect the bounty. Well, he breaks Barry's nose (possible accounting for B.W.'s ever growing bulbous feature-I swear he looks more like Blackjack every day) He reveals to the always inquisitive Gordon Solie, in delightfully sinister tones, that the bounty was placed by someone named "Nivek Navillus". (You know who spelled backwards) Gordo comments that "there is something darn familar about that name." Meanwhile, every show for 3 weeks prior had Steve "Still had my hair at this point" Kiern via videotape from Memphis warning Barry & Mike "Can I park your car Mr. Watts?" Graham to watch out for Kevin Sullivan. Don't trust him. I mean, if the promotion had taken out a billboard on the Florida Turnpike it couldn't have been more obvious Sullivan was turning. I'm making just here, but it was a fun, wacky scenario. When he turned, Kevin was merely a sinister heel. But he just kept getting more and more bizaare. He'd paint his face-one side white, one side black (the eternal analogy of good vs. evil) He shaved his chest hair into the shape of an "X". (Obviously a Spike Lee fan) The program with Dusty was very good at first. When Dusty lost his loser leaves town match on Christmas nite in 1982, it was a real shock. The Midnight Rider deal was good at first, with Gordon giving us a weekly countdown until the American Dream's inevitable return. ("43 days until the American Dream is re-instated wrestling fans!") The Bull of the Woods made his big return, kicked the devil's butt, and the world was a safer place, right? WRONG....

The problem was that instead of ending the angle after a hot 6 month run, Dusty kept bringing Kevin back. He worked under a mask (As "Lucifer", how original) and then returned after throwing ink into the eyes of Dusty's sister. It was almost as if Dusty decided that instead of coming up with new ideas, he'd just keep bringing back Kevin. Result? Dusty & Kevin flat out ruined the territory. Vince McMahon and Titan Sports didn't burn down Florida, Dusty & Kevin did. You have to understand that this was a state that for a decade was based on the Brisco's, the Funk's, Graham & Kiern, Bob Roop & Bob Orton, people like that. The promotion, do mainly to promoter Eddie Graham, had an air of legitimacy about it. This feud, and especially the length of it, killed the promotion.

A feud like this, and Kevin's gimmick, then and today, appeals to the lowest demographic audience. A young promotion like Smokey Mountain certainly wants to find a niche with the wrestling fan in their region of the country. But, as a growing company attempting to become more profitable by attracting new fans, this isn't the kind of thing that will work. Would a parent of a young child want them to watch a wrestling match were a guy stabs his opponent "47 times"? I'm not saying become a bland, colorless promotion. Don't get me wrong. The set-up for the angle was done very well. The letters from the "Master", the assorted bounty hunters, all was done well. The explanation for Kevin's reinstatement, after the angle, was brilliant, with lawyers threatening to sue Smokey Mountain for denying Sullivan a "right to earn a living". The whole set-up and explanation was done great. But the ultimate pay-off went too far. It was overkill. Mr. Pogo setting his opponent on fire during a WING match last year was too much. Brian Lee getting stuck in the head with a spike 47 times was also too much.

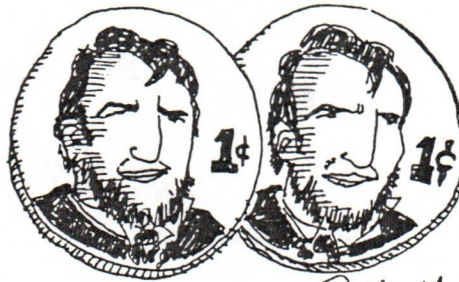
Here's a piece of free advice to Jim Cornette: Jimmy, keep the reins on Kevin. He's a bright guy with a lot of ideas. But he needs someone to streamline his ideas so they don't go too far. Dusty didn't do that and ended up ruining the best promotion in the country (Actually Dusty did that twice). I've heard that back in the early to mid 80's, when All-Japan kept coming up with all sort of terrific angles, that it was Terry Funk would come up with a great angle and give it to brother Dory (You know, the "rational one"). Dory and promoter Giant Baba would then take Terry's idea and mainstream it so that it fit the purpose of the promotion. It still worked, but it never went "too far". Dory & Baba knew what the All-Japan fan would and would not accept. They honed the rough edges so that the piece fit the puzzle. Jim, when you & Stan & Tom brawled in the hallway with the Fultons, it was reasonably believable. It had almost an "I Witness Video" feel to it. The Sullivan-Lee angle to the casual viewer looked either like attempted murder or something out of "The Itchy & Scratchy Show". A cartoon. Jim, grab hold of those reins.

(continued from page 2)
crowd was going nuts for the opening of the show but that was it. That guy from WFAN was annoying as hell. I think Vince needs now more than ever to try to get some credibility back but using comics (and nothing more the guy can add, won't cut it.....I thought the Crush-Doink angle was hilarious. Watching the clown take off his arm had me rolling. But I can't believe people can take carrying Crush out on a stretcher so serious. Did you hear the fans chanting Crush's name as they wheeled him out. Unreal..... Jeff Bowdren was over here watching "WCW Saturday Night" this past weekend. We were howling watching the Watts-Anderson video from 7-11. If I was in a fight in a parking lot, I know I would look to use an STF. How realistic. I laughed at the kid who tried to break them up and then stood straight up and shrugged his shoulders.....Well, the IWF's Texas tour got cancelled. What a surprise. They were skedded to leave on the 11th at 6:00 on a tour bus. But Eddie Mansfield called the boys sometime that afternoon and told them an ice storm had hit the Dallas area and they wouldn't be able to get through. Some of the wrestlers turned on the Weather Channel and saw weather in Dallas to be raining and 54 degrees. I didn't know ice froze at that temperature. Some of the boys also questioned that if it took 16 hours to get there, wouldn't things be cleared up by then? Here's a new weather forecast for the talented boys of the IWF. Find a new promotion so you won't get snowed every day.....Well, while I get out of the mainstream newsletter business, someone is getting back into it. Jeff Mullins has started putting out Son Of Pro Wrestling Sushi. And for those who loved the original, this is more of the same. Send a dollar and a self addressed stamped envelope to Jeff at P.O. Box 36189, San Jose, CA 95158. Lots of laughs with the Sushimeister himself. Tell him "AR" sent you.....Angelo Poffo's new WAW had a free bout at a car show in Tampa on 1/2 with Greg Valentine & Pat Tanaka beating Hercules & Firecat. Poffo is planning on taping TV in England later this month with another taping skedded for Florida in February. Lots of people saying that Hulk Hogan and Poffo's two sons Lanny and Randy Savage may be involved as well which correlates stories heard in Japan that Hogan wants to start his own promotion.....After I typed the yearbook article on Florida indys I realized I left a very talented name off of the top ten list and that is Pat Tanaka. Pat had vanished for a while but certainly deserves a spot somewhere in the top ten..... A couple of last minute plugs before I figure out an easy way to ride off into the sunset. Outside Interference's Rountable '92: A Discussion of the Year In Professional Wrestling available at \$2 from Dave Prazak, 2278 Hidden Creek Ct., Lisle, IL 60532. Highlighted by a discussion of '92 by the OI staff and also contains a list of memorable matches, a final commentary on '92 by Dave, and some other surprises.....Evan Ginzburg has a special so long offer for "AR" readers. A 6 month trial subscription for half price. Send \$3.75 to Evan at P.O. Box 471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, NY 11364.... One of the most creative newsletters out there is Fantasy Federation put out by Jeff Cohen of 50 Shelley Lane, Great Neck, NY 11023. \$1 an issue will get you many dream match ups.....Well, there is no easy way to ride off into the sunset. I hope I hear from many of you with my new one page venture but if not, always know that I appreciated everything all of you have done for "AR". Because as I always said, if it weren't for you, there would never have been an Arena Report. Thanks again and take care of yourselves.

See ya,
Ron

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By: MIKE TERRY

So it's come to this: the final 2-cents. First: parting shots. Then we'll whip out the Kleenex.

Hasn't Jim Ross softened the on-air hype for the Wrestling Hotline? And isn't that long overdue?.....why does Bill Watts waste so much time responding to his critics in the sheets? Doesn't he simply open up the problems to a much wider audience?.....Separated at birth: Danny Spivey and Beetlejuice.....the composers of the song "Rhythm of the Rain" ("listen to the rhythm of the falling rain") should sue the writers of Rick Steamboat's lame new song for plagiarism.....to those involved with WCW's "Slam Jam" album: how does it feel to know that Zamfir and his pan flute can sell millions of albums and you'll never sell more than a few hundred?.....most overused moves in wrestling these days: DDT's & piledrivers on the concrete floor.....and if I wanted to present the most prestigious award in wrestling-the Battlebowl ring-I'd sure pick a retired baseball player to do it--NOT!-and Hank--hey, babe-thanks for dressing up.....Vinnie Vegas looks like he's been pumping lots of slot machines lately.....and has Johnny B. Badd been shooting that confetti gun into his veins?

Many of us have marveled about how remarkable it is that all these big dumb white guy promoters can't come up with a successful gimmick for an African-American wrestler. As they rack their feeble brains trying to create a marketable character, it occurs to me that the most successful black wrestler of all time was a man who was over consistently nationwide for over 20 years--Bobo Brazil. Bobo had no gimmick to speak of--except the headbutt. He wasn't a technically talented wrestler, but he had credibility. He headlined cards around the country and he SOLD TICKETS. He never yelled on interviews, in fact, he was very soft spoken. He never danced in the ring. He didn't rhyme, and he wasn't a tanned white guy. Bobo was simply himself--a class act. What a gimmick!

And now it's time to say "so long."

I've always had a problems with goodbyes. I work two jobs--fulltime at a university; part-time at a rock and roll radio station. Obviously, there are lots of goodbyes in those professions. Students you've worked closely with for four or five years have this funny habit of graduating and moving away. Radio is such a nomadic business, you hesitate sometimes to forge strong relationships because most air personalities move on after just a year or two.

That's why I find this particular column so difficult to write. It's so much like a goodbye to so many people I've come to regard as my extended family. When Ron called with the news, he urged me to keep writing for another sheet, but as I see things at this point, this may be my swan song. I'll never say "never," but I don't see this column fitting any of the existing sheets, and assuming I'm not going to be deluged with offers to write for another sheet, this is it for me.

Often you and I have not agreed on the hot issues of the day, but I hope I've brought you some entertainment. I know I've irritated a few people over the years--I seem to have a propensity for pissing off Canadians, and if I really cut loose like I'm tempted to in this final column on a certain pompous prick from Pittsburgh, I wouldn't be welcome in the Steel City, either. (Ooh, that felt good!).

But I'm really going to miss the *Arena Report* family and I'm sure you're will also. Maybe it's because I'm so closely involved, but even before I began to contribute to AR, I appreciated the family atmosphere that prevailed, which I really don't seem to find in other sheets.

This is turning out to be a lot more sappy than I intended, but there may be no opportunities in the future for me to say how much I've appreciated the forum. It's meant a lot to me and it'll leave a big void in my life.

Ron--I think I can understand the painful decision you had to make. I respect the fact that you didn't just quit and stiff your readers and staff as others in your general neighborhood have. At least you're upfront and you have the integrity to carefully order your life's priorities.

I hoped that as I wrote this, some slick way of ending would occur to me. It hasn't. It's the end of the road, folks. So I'll wrap it with my life's philosophy courtesy of Dr. Sidney Freidman from M*A*S*H: "Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice. Pull down your pants and slide on the ice." And that's my 2-cents.



UNDER THE MUSHROOM by K L O N

- ARENA REPORT, DOINK THE CLOWN, AND THE WHITE CASTLE OF FEAR

The saga of newsletter known as Arena Report ends with the very issue you hold in your hands. To say I was astonished when Ron Lemieux told me of his decision to close up shop would be an understatement. Ron and I are like brothers. Probably closer than many brothers. But ending AR came like a bolt from the blue to me too gang. I never saw it coming and it breaks my heart to see it end. Not because of the column I write, Ron would be a rich man if he had a ten spot for every time I have talked of quitting. I will truly miss AR and it's bi-weekly forays into my life. As I have said before AR is/was the meeting place of diverse opinions. I hope that Ron finds happiness in his post Arena Report life but we the readers who knew and loved AR will be the poorer because of its demise.

The WWF braintrust never fails to insult the intelligence of the wrestling fan. I could have lived with Doink the Clown wrestling, I guess. Wrestling in the WWF is always searching for new characters and new roles for worn out ones. Lucha Libre fans have had clown characters before in Super Muneco, Super Pinocchio and the like. I realize wrestling will never go back to two guys in trunks coming to the ring and wrestling. The flash and razz-ma-tazz have come to be expected. But do they have to give the guy championship matches? I had thought the voodoo crap was as low as it could go. There is something inherently stupid about world championship bouts for a clown. However I have the god-awful feeling that the WWF can make money off the clown bit. Wake me up when its over.

What the hell is the White Castle of Fear? Big Van Vader with a platter of miniature hamburgers with no onions? WCW never learns from its past of botched gimmick main events.

A solid thumbs up to WCW for bringing back (if it happens) the man, the legend, the one and only Ric Flair. I told Lemieux that Flair was coming back to only to lose the world championship to Eric Watts. The addition of Chris Benoit to their ranks adds another superior wrestler to the WCW ranks. Too bad nobody in WCW knows how to utilize top talent once they have them.

A little bird told me that Flair would have Watts job before many moons have passed. We are seven months and two p-p-v events into Bill Watts regime and in my opinion he flat out sucks wastewater. For a legendary wrestler and promoter all he has done was send the Steiner Bros into the eager arms of the WWF and jam his sorry ass son down our throats. His tv is boring and his idea of top talent is Van Hammer. Gosh was Jim Herd that bad? Yes he was, don't even think about bringing back the father of OZ and the Ding Dongs. What could Jim Cornette do as booker???

Terry Taylor is doing great color work on WWF Spotlight. A recent impression of Flair was a highlight.

Well gang I guess it's the end of AR and the last you will be hearing from me for awhile. It's been a trip and I hope that my little column has been informative, enlightening, or entertaining. Keep the faith gang. Wrestling will always be around.

THE MUSHROOM MAN

BOAT BLAST IN BALTIMORE

If I live and die with only one great Ron Lemieux story to tell, this is it. Back in ⁹⁰~~80~~ when Sting was poised to take the WCW strap from Ric Flair, a big bunch of us from all over the country decided to attend the BASH in Baltimore. Word had leaked out that the title was going to change hands at the BASH and so, like flies drawn to honey, about 60 or 70 of us invaded that beautiful town in July, and this would be the place and time where I would finally get to meet most of the Who's Who in the wrestling underground, people with names and personalities I had come to know primarily through the sheets and their glorious letters pages. Because B-More is quite a tourist town with a terrific, bustling, harbour area, the harbour itself was the place where most of us spent daylight hours before and after the Flair-Sting hook-up. The harbor was great because it also had tons of food places where, no matter what the grappling fan's budget, he could afford to eat, even if it was pizza slices which were favored by most of us who had dropped major portions of our life savings and inheritances on air fare and the Five Star accommodations at the luxurious Omni-Harbour Inn. Hey, if the Omni was good enough for then booker Ole Anderson to go slummin' in, then it was good enough for a guy like me from Sushiland, and other guys from other exotic sounding places, like Lake Mary, and Melbourne, Florida, and Asheboro, North Carolina.

Well, the day after Ric Flair dropped the strap to the Stinger, and after about 30 of us congratulated Flair later that night at an Italian restaurant, most of the get-together guys took off for home, except for about a dozen of us who wanted to spend more time together with newfound friends. So we all headed back down to the Harbour for one last orgy of cheese pizza, cold Cokes, and a ride around the harbour on one of those big double-decker tour boats that can handle about 500 people.

I guess the fight that two of us got into on this tour boat was bound to happen. You put a bunch of males together for about three days of staying up late watching wrestling videos and reading back issues of other guy's sheets, walking back and forth from the harbor to the hotel in the hot sun and humidity of the east coast in summer, witnessing one of the greater events in grap history, and eating nothing but pizza, and it's inevitable that unbridled violence is going to happen. I guess most of the guys on that boat that Sunday afternoon were quite surprised that it was Johnny McAdam, of New Hampshire, and me who suddenly started yelling infront of about three hundred other people and, then, before you knew it, were throwing punches and kicking each other (after I threw a tub of popcorn at McAdam who had been riding my ass all day with that needling voice of his, to which he responded by throwing his Coke in my face. Okay. It wasn't cool for me to hit him with my popcorn. Violence only begets violence. But it was also uncool for McAdam to hit me in the face with a cup of soda that still had most of the ice left in it!)

The bottom part of the boat, near the big snack bar area, had a lot of loose metal folding chairs (not kidding!) and I was surprised at how easy it was to throw them when you are all pumped up with adrenalin. By then, the big crowd next to us had pulled away and I recall seeing some men with fear on their faces picking up their small sons and daughters in the event that our fight spilled into the crowd. I also recall the variety of expressions on most of the faces of the guys we were with, especially the looks on the faces of "Commisioner" Harry White, of St. Louis, Scott "The Referee" Dickenson, of Salam, Mass, and Ron "Arena Report" Lemieux. These three guys were chasing after Johnny McAdam and me, trying to break us apart, ducking chairs, jumping over tables, risking their own necks trying to break up the fight before we killed each other and ruined what most said back then (and since then) was the best wrestling get-together ever held since the sheets and everything went ballistic back in the mid-80's.

Oh, the fight. Of course it was a work. McAdam was so good, both on the verbal end and the physical end, it was amazing. And by the time Harry and Scott and Ron pulled us apart (with McAdam and me trying to break free just like on TV), Johnny and I were laughing so hard we could have died. We'd done it. We really pulled it off. And all of the guys who were there, except for one, admitted that they had been fooled, and that to a man, they felt like they were marks again, kicking themselves for believing it had been a shoot.

But none of them were really laughing with us. And that's when I suddenly wished we had not done it. The look on Ron's face had been one of real, legit concern. Here I was laughing at him and the others because we had just pulled the wool over the eyes of some of the underground's finest, but there they were, ashen, and in shock for being the buttend of a joke, but also recovering from what they thought was real. Under the circumstances, those three guys showed their true stripes of humanity, courage, and friendship. I'm sure a few of the other guys would have jumped in to help sooner, had they not been so stunned. And I do recall Klon coming down the pike looking like a determined Bruiser Brody and, to be honest, that's when I stopped the act, because from the look on Klon's face, I couldn't tell if he was coming to help break it up, or he simply wanted to join in the fun!

I'll miss AR, Ron, but I'll also look forward to Arena Ramblings, or whatever you'll call it when you can't take retirement any more and eventually do the comeback thing. Take care, friend.

Jeff Mullins

San Jose, CA



SHOOTKICK

by Jeff Bowdren

1ST ANNUAL 1992 SHOOTKICK AWARDS

SHOOTKICK OF THE YEAR: Bill Watts. Whatta ya mean, your surprised? Yes, Cowpie Bill sure came thru as the biggest bonehead of the last year and one most deserving of the old stiff kick to the chops. Let's see...How about the mega push for the Mike Von Erich of the 90's, Erik Watts? Or the introduction of such hot talent as Robbie Walker, Tex Slinger (or was it Slashing, I can never remember), and dynamic, still-learning-to-throw-that-dropkick-brother, Tommy Gunn? Or how about the de-emphasis of talent like Bobby Eaton, Arn "Hey Akmad, can I have a slurpee...oof, leave me alone Erik..." Anderson, Brad Armstrong, Paul E. or Brian "Still waiting for the heel push you promised me" Pillman? Or how about that whole ridiculous I-can't-figure-this-whole-angle-out-like-for-instance-who's-supposed-to-be-the-babyface..thing with Paul E. and Madusa? And let's not forget about Halloween Havoc, you know, the P.P.V. that was supposed to be the first one that could truly be called Bill's baby? Yes sir, all those reasons and many more make Bill a truly deserving winner of the old foot to the head. Congrats big cowboy and hey! Good luck in your continuing bid for next years top prize!!

Now, our other awards!

The Tom Pritchard Wish-I-Were-Really-Roddy-Piper Award:
The winner is....Tom Pritchard! (Lifetime award)

The Most Obnoxious Ringside Fan:
The winner is....John Hitchcock! Old Mr. Parts Unknown wins it not for his constant hammering of Erik "The Weenie" Watts, not for his almost deity like worship of Double A, not for having a stripper entertain a certain well known wrestling personality in his home and not because he does the fabulous illustrations for you favorite newsletter...No, my big man wins it for his recent comments at a Smokey Mountain card. The set up was that there was a battle royal and the fans could pick any wrestler. The winning wrestler would then pick one of his supporters name out of a hat and the winner won a VCR. John of course being "Mr. Vegas" (that Vinnie Vegas actually), went with longshot Robbie Eagle. After he got tossed out, Hitchcock jumps up and screams to Eagle (PG version) "I had your name buddy! You cost me a VCR you damn loser!"-best ringside quote I heard all year

The Most Obnoxious Fan-Drunken Division:
The winner is....Dave Flaherty! Easy winner, as those who know him and yes....merely tolerate him could tell you. Can transform himself via alcohol into a 2nd rate Tom Pritchard (which may be redundant) 2nd place would have to go to Bruce Mitchell, who according to a certain "Masked Avenger" has a problem with liquor at P.P.V.'s.

The Brian Tramel Disappeared-Off-the-Face-of-the-Earth-While-Still Owing-People-Issues-of-Your-Newsletter Award:
The winner is....Alex Marvez! The obvious difference here being that I do care if I ever talke to B.T. again.

Top Ten Reasons Why The Torch is Better Than Arena Report:

- 10) Bruce Mitchell-has Master's degree, wants to be a teacher
John Hitchcock-guy who owns comic book store....'nuff said...
- 9) Carlie Gill-Torch, Marianne Ryan-A.R.-oops, they cancel each other
- 8) Wade-Vikings fan, Ron-Celtics fan-reason to hate alone
- 7) Wade-has paid ads, drives Corvette, Ron-lots of comps-drives Chevette
- 6) Wade-like Lightning Kid, Ron-associates with Eddy Mansfield!
- 5) Attractive photos of editor & his columnists
- 4) Torch-big city, A.R.-strictly Mayberry
- 3) Two words: Mark Madden (oh I'm sorry. This is one of the reasons A.R. is better...)
- 2) Wade-single college guy, Ron-married-'nuff said (again)
And the number 1 reason why the Torch is better than A.R....
- 1) Wade would never disgrace his readers by going into an establishment featuring "all nude entertainment".....

A PIECE OF MY MIND (A.K.A. HARDCORE REGRETS BUYING A WWF TICKET)
BY: EVAN GINZBURG

It had been over 3 years since I supported a WWF show. I had vowed NEVER to return as I simply did not believe the arena product was worthy of my money or time. But being a sheet reader, I kept hearing about the classic half hour 4* Flair-Hart matches going on throughout the country. Thus, when the circus rolled into my town, I figured for 10 bucks I couldn't miss.

I couldn't have been more wrong...

This is a rare WWF arena report from yours truly. The "show" (it felt more like doing penance for past sins) was perpetrated upon 10,000 some odd fans at the Nassau Coliseum out in Uniondale Long Island in N.Y. on 12/27/92.

Anyway, let me describe the HORRORS I have seen and be grateful you weren't there too:

1. Lance Cassidy W Repo Man DUD (No redeeming social value)
2. Damien Demento W Tito Santana DUD (I was beginning to feel that I was demented for being here).
3. Bushwackers and Tiger Jackson W Beverly Brothers & Midget DUD (As I said, the circus was in town).
4. Sean Michaels DOOR Randy Savage DUD (Great entrance music for these two titans. Seriously, though- so incredibly slow moving and bad as to be shocking. Savage is SHOT.)
5. Jim Duggan W Brooklyn Brawler NEGATIVE 37 STARS (My grandmother can do better clothlines than Duggan and she died last June. Brilliant fans chanted "USA, USA", not realizing Brooklyn is part of their country and HOME TOWN!.)
6. Money Inc. W Nasty Boys 1 1/4* (A few good moments between well needed rest-holds from 4 of the nation's top sleepwalkers. Dibiase's going through the motions too.)
7. Brett Hart W Ric Flair 25 Min. 3 1/4* (Slow paced first 2/3, great last few minutes but I was too numb from rest of card to fully enjoy- a brain needs some form of stimulation and I hadn't had any in two plus hours- in fact I had nearly lapsed into a coma, and my IQ had deteriorated to goldfish level by match #7).

NEXT CARD AT NASSAU COLISEUM 2/26- YOKOZUMA VS. UNTERTAKER-- I plan on missing this one, but fully intend to catch their Feb. 1999 show.

My friends, all fellow hardcores, (rather than call up Ralph Nader to complain about consumer fraud), wanted me to include their comments on the horrendous festivities:

HOWARD ROTH: This card reinforced my decision why I haven't gone to live wrestling in years.

EDDIE GOLDMAN: Only death and unspeakable things come to mind- I'd rather be vacationing in Bosnia.

ADAM HOROWITZ: As Meltzer says, the matches for the most part told a story. They were tragedies.

RICHEL OLANDER: I missed the Giants game.

This has been Evan Ginzburg with a piece of what's left of my mind. Like a former drug addict who lapses back into an old habit, I slipped today. Next time I even think about going to a WWF show, somebody tie me up and take my wallet, o.k.?

Later readers and happy new year!

ADDENDUM:

I was deeply saddened when Ron told me he was ceasing publication of Arena Report. For me, AR has been an important emotional "outlet"- for the most part to vent my frustrations at U.S. wrestling's sad commercialization and deterioration over the course of this sheet's five plus year lifespan. To have an intelligent, "smart" audience and an editor who left you for the most part to "do your own thing" was a joy and a blessing, and I'll miss this forum.

I'll also miss reading AR- which was always informative, fun, and successfully avoided being one of countless "Meltzer clones." I'll always remember AR as the ONLY sheet I tore open, and voraciously read in one sitting.

I could go on and on, but simply put, I'll miss "AR."

Dear Arena Report Readers:

Well, those of you who have read the entire issue are now aware of the fact that this is Ron's last issue. I know that I speak for everyone in wishing him the best ("Hey Ron! Don't let the door hit you on your ass as your leaving!")

Anyway, now that Mr. High & Mighty, I-don't-have-time-for-a-newsletter has gone and abandoned the rest of us, its time to regroup and examine our options. I for one believe that there is certainly room for more than two major newsletters in the world of wrestling (And by the way, am I the only one who has noticed how there are now two major promotions and two major newsletters? Art imitates life...) I think that the newsletter world needs more than two majors. I think hearing only Dave & Wade's viewpoint makes for a very narrow viewpoint indeed. However, there are a few things to be considered. 1) I need to know that interest is still there. The bottom line is that while butterflies may be free, putting together a newsletter is not. I would like for everyone who is an active subscriber to A.R. to drop me a note and indicate to me whether they would continue to support a third newsletter. I'm not asking for a one year subscription from you. If I put a newsletter out, I realize it will fail or succeed on its merits. I just need to gauge initial reaction.

2) What were your favorite and least favorite parts of A.R.? I have some ideas for changes that could be made. I'd like to get some feedback from you, the subscriber, on what you read and what you skip over. If something in the newsletter is not being read, or is boring, I'll get rid of it.

3) As it stands right now, I'd like to keep the proposed newsletter coming out every two weeks. However, the costs of putting out an issue keep going up. Right now, Ron charges \$1.00 an issue. Would you have a problem if the cost of an issue went up to \$1.25? Hey, maybe this seems like trivial crap to you, but it has to be factored in.

4) What would you like to see in the newsletter that's not in there now? More results, more columns, more interviews, etc. What's your cup of tea? Is there anyone who you would like to see more writings from? Give me some suggestions!

Well, that'll just about do it. I would again encourage everyone who is interested in keeping a third major newsletter alive and kicking to respond. I think this sheet is worth saving. How about you?

Ever so sincerely.....



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